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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[19 January 2002]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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ENG

Question of the violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, including policies of Racial Discrimination and Segregatian and of Apartheid, in all countries, with particular reference to Colonial and other Dependent Countries and Territories: Report of the Sub-Commission, Under Commission on Human Rights Resolution 8 (XXIII)

The gross and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Tibetan people committed by the People's Republic of China, including the implantation of Chinese settlers into Tibet, continue to be documented. Human rights abuses are increasing in number and severity since the adoption of resolution 1991/10 by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Individually, these human rights violations warrant immediate intervention by the mechanism of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Collectively, the pattern is so pervasive and persistent as to demand immediate condemnation and action by the UNCHR's 58th session.

The Chinese Government continues to attempt to undermine the practice and high-teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. It still refuses to allow visitors to confirm the well-being of the eleventh Panchen Lama of Tibet, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. Human rights groups and Governments reports indicate that scores of monks and nuns have been detained or expelled from their monasteries and nunneries for objecting to an ongoing "patriotic re-education campaign". The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy based in India records that more than 12,000 monks have been expelled for opposing the campaign between 1996-2001.

In June 2001 reports emerged from Tibet of the increased official Chinese monitoring of the growing clergy population of Serthar Buddhist Institute located in the so-called "Karze Autonomous Tibetan Prefecture" of Sichuan province. In the spring of this year, officials from 13 different districts of Kanze, Dartsedo, Derge, Nyarong, Sershul and Serthar (Serta) districts of Kham came to massive Serthar Buddhist Institute or the Larung Ngarig Nangten Institute. The officials received direct instructions from both the Chinese government in Beijing that the Institute's massive clergy population of more than 10,000 must be reduced to 1,500. The authorities said the excluded members of clergy must be returned to their respective districts or countries and the vacated monastic rooms demolished. The clergy population of Serthar Buddhist Institute cuts across nationalities. There are about 1,000 Chinese monks from China along with students from Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, including 4,000 nuns who live and study at a nunnery, affiliated to the institute. The bulk of the students at Serthar Buddhist Institute were Tibetans. By October 2001, another Tibetan Buddhist institution faced a similar crackdown when the Chinese authorities demolished the living quarters of Yachen Gar Monastery in Eastern Tibet and expelled most of its students.

In April 2001, it was known that a five-metre bronze and gold statue of Maitriya, the future Buddha, that showcases the tomb of the 7th Dalai Lama, is being shipped to Shanghai from Lhasa, the Tibetan capital. The discovery together with the news that statues and artefacts from another shrine in the Potala Palace are being readied to be shipped as soon as possible to Shanghai is causing deep pain and anxiety to the people of Tibet. Idols and images made of gold, silver, brass and precious stones and metal were taken to China and eventually they found their way in the market of Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo where antique-collectors from the West bought them for exorbitant prices. A rough estimate of the foreign exchange earned by China from the sale of Tibetan religious and art objects is more than 80 billion American dollars."

That pattern of human rights abuses, and the sources of that pattern, were recognized in the International Commission of Jurists' 1997 report on Tibet, in which it concluded that Tibet is

under "alien subjugation" and called for a referendum by Tibetans to determine how they wish to be governed. Allowing Tibetans to exercise their right of self-determination appears to be the only way to end the persistent human rights abuses in Tibet. Indeed, the UN General Assembly resolutions of 1959, 1961 and 1965 called upon the People's Republic of China to respect the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination.

On 24 October 2001, in an address to the plenary session of the European Parliament, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said: "My initiatives and overtures over the years to engage the Chinese leadership in a dialogue remains unreciprocated. Last September, I communicated through the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi our wish to send a delegation to Beijing to deliver a detailed memorandum outlining my thinking on the issue of Tibet and to explain and discuss the points raised in the memorandum. I conveyed that through face-to-face meetings we would succeed in clarifying misunderstandings and overcoming distrust. I expressed the strong belief that once this is achieved then a mutually acceptable solution of the problem can be found without much difficulty. But the Chinese government is refusing to accept my delegation till today."

Since 1979, the Tibetan government in exile under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been pursuing a policy of dialogue with China to resolve the Tibetan problem. In the spirit of reconciliation and compromise, numerous initiatives were outlined by the Dalai Lama. However, the Chinese leadership continues to oppose negotiations without preconditions although the Dalai Lama has said on record that he is not seeking the independence of Tibet. China has instead initiated a ruthless campaign in Tibet to further deny the Tibetan people of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Beijing hardened its policy towards "splittist" activities and repression was intensified all over Tibet to eliminate political dissents. The current intensification of political repression is an outcome of Chinese authorities policies that are clearly reflected in the official statements of their leaders. During the seventh Chinese People's Consultative Conference, on 22 May, 2000, Lechog, the chairman of the "Tibet Autonomous Region" said: "...government staff should advise local people and their subordinates to oppose splittism and cut ties with the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama issue should be studied and any underground organisation activating in Tibet should be filtered and gotten rid of." After the 11 September tragedy in the United States of America, Beijing is now adamant to use its backing of the international coalitionagainst terrorism to gain support for its policy of suppression in Tibet.

In conclusion, we call upon the Commission on Human Rights to recognize the persistent pattern of human rights abuses against the Tibetan people and the continued failure of the People's Republic of China to resume negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his representatives to resolve the issue of Tibet. The pattern of human rights abuses in Tibet points to a threat of destruction of the Tibetans as a people unless the international community intervene to end the violations.